

# Seizure angers Lithuania

By Don Kirk  
USA TODAY

Soviet troops seized two buildings from the Lithuanian Communist Party in the capital of Vilnius Sunday and the rebellious republic threatened to "punish" such action.

The Red Army escalated the confrontation — fueled by Lithuania's declaration of independence March 11 — as U.S. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney warned anew of the impact a military crackdown might have on arms talks.

Rumors spread of Soviet plans to take over Lithuania's Supreme Council or parliament, where President Vytautas Landsbergis was meeting Sunday with a colonel who'd taken over two schools.

Landsbergis declared such action would be "punished by Lithuanian law."

Cheney, on CBS's *Face the Nation*, stiffened the U.S. stand against Soviet intervention. He warned of "significant negative consequences" if troops resort to violence.

Soviet troops took over a high school and an institute run by the local Communist Party — to turn them over to "loyal" communists viewed by Moscow as rightful occupants.

Vilnius TV broadcast the news, along with Landsbergis' statement, in an atmosphere of uneasy calm. The takeover came one day after a convoy of 30 Soviet tanks and 68 other military vehicles rumbled through the city. Also Sunday:

► The Communist Party of Estonia voted 432-3 for independence, but agreed to a six-month transition period.

► Pope John Paul II referred to the "Lithuanian nation" in an impassioned plea and called for "sincere dialogue" between both sides.

► Elections in Hungary, 4A